

REMARKS

By this amendment, various paragraphs of the specification and Figures 4C, 4D, 12A, and 12B have been amended to correct certain informalities, and claims 284-291 have been added. Accordingly, claims 258, 267, 275, and 283-291 are currently pending in the application, of which claims 258, 267, 275, 283-284, 286, 288, 290 are independent claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments do not add new matter to the application and are fully supported by the specification.

In view of the above amendments and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and timely withdrawal of the pending rejections for the reasons discussed below.

Double Patenting Claim Rejections

Claims 258, 267, 275, and 283 stand provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 260, 261, 272, 273, 288, 298, 309, 310 and 320 of copending Application No. 10/825,281. Applicants have submitted a terminal disclaimer to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this double patenting rejection of claims 258, 267, 275, and 283.

Claims 258, 267, 275, and 283 stand provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 250, 263-265, 273, 274, 284, 298-300, 312, and 313 of copending Application No. 10/824,891. Applicants have submitted a terminal disclaimer to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this double patenting rejection of claims 258, 267, 275, and 283.

Claims 258, 267, 275, and 283 stand provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 250, 259, 260, 264, 271, 272, 278, 284, 291, 292, and 298 of copending Application No. 10/824,908. Applicants have submitted a terminal disclaimer to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this double patenting rejection of claims 258, 267, 275, and 283.

Claims 258, 267, 275, and 283 stand provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 250, 260, 261, 270, 271, 281, 282, 291, 292, and 298 of copending Application No. 10/824,929. Applicants have submitted a terminal disclaimer to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this double patenting rejection of claims 258, 267, 275, and 283.

Applicants note that "[t]he filing of a terminal disclaimer to obviate a rejection based on nonstatutory double patenting is not an admission of the propriety of the rejection [because] the filing of a terminal disclaimer simply serves the statutory function of removing the rejection of double patenting, and raises neither a presumption nor estoppel on the merits of the rejection" (MPEP § 804.02.II, citations omitted). Hence, the terminal disclaimer included with this reply simply serves the statutory function of removing the double patenting rejection without raising a presumption or estoppel on the merits of the rejection.

Added Claims

Added claims 284-291 are directed to additional features of the invention, which are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Accordingly, claims 284-291 are in condition for allowance.

Other Matters

Figures 4C, 4D, 12A, and 12B, and various paragraphs of the specification have been amended solely for the purposes of informality correction, better wording and clarification. These amendments are not made for the purpose of avoiding prior art or narrowing the claimed invention, and no change in claim scope is intended. Therefore, Applicant does not intend to relinquish any subject matter by these amendments.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the pending Office Action and respectfully submits that all of the stated objections and grounds for rejection have been overcome or rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the number below to expedite prosecution.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: April 11, 2006

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